

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-13 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 T-03 OMB-01 AID-20 SR-02 ORM-03 DPW-01 RSR-01

/146 W

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R 091140 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8280

INFO AMEMBASSY BERN

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: SREF, MOPS, PK, BG, IN

SUBJ: BENGALLEES IN PAKISTAN

REFERENCE A. DACCA 994; B. ISLAMABAD 1287

BEGIN SUMMARY: GOP SPOKESMAN MARCH 8 ISSUED STATEMENT
CHALLENGING RECENT ALLEGATIONS FROM DACCA AND NEW DELHI
THAT BENGALLEES IN PAKISTAN WERE BEING ILL- TREATED.
SPOKESMAN CLAIMED BENGALLEES WERE BEING ACCORDED
" NORMAL FACILITIES," AND ASSERTED THAT REPATRIATION
OF 15,000 DESTITUTE AND DEPENDENT BENGALLEES WAS
BEING DELAYED BECAUSE BDG HAD FAILED TO MAKE NECESSARY
TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS. HOWEVER, ICRC DELEGATE RECENTLY
TOLD CONGEN KARACHI THAT GOP HAD CAUSED MAJOR SETBACK
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TO REPATRIATION PROCESS BY REQUIRING ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION ON EACH DESIGNATED REPATRIATE. END SUMMARY

1. IN STATEMENT ISSUED ISLAMABAD MARCH 8, GOP SPOKES-
MAN LABELED AS "PROPAGANDA" RECENT OFFICIAL STATEMENTS
FROM DACCA (REFTEL A) AND NEW DELHI ALLEGING THAT
BENGALEES IN PAKISTAN WERE BEING ILL- TREATED. SPOKES-
MAN ASSERTED THAT RESIDENT BENGALEES WERE BEING ACCORDED
"NORMAL FACILITIES," AND SAID CONDITION OF BENGALEES
"IS NO SECRET FROM ANYONE." HE CHARGED THAT PURPOSE
OF "FALSE PROPAGANDA IS ... TO DEFLECT THE PRESSURE
OF PUBLIC OPINION" WHICH FAVORS RELEASE OF 90,000
PAKISTANI POWS BEING HELD IN INDIA IN DEFIANCE INTER-
NATIONAL LAW. SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT BDG HAD SO FAR
MADE NO TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS FOR 15,000 BENGALEES WHICH
GOP OFFERED TO REPATRIATE. HE SAID ONLY RESPONSE FROM
DACCA TO GOP OFFER TO DATE HAD BEEN INSISTENCE THAT
REPATRIATION BE BY SEA RATHER THAN LAND. HE ESTIMATED
THAT THERE WERE 157,000 BENGALEES IN PAKISTAN AWAITING
REPATRIATION AND CHARGED THAT SOLUTION TO PROBLEM
WAS BEING DELAYED " BECAUSE OF BLATANT ATTEMPTS TO
USE THE PAKISTANI PRISONERS OF WAR AS A LEVER OF
PRESSURE FOR POLITICAL AND OTHER ADVANTAGES."

2. COMMENTING ON BENGALEE SITUATION IN CONVERSATION WITH
CONGEN KARACHI OFFICER MARCH 3, ICRC DELEGATE CLERC
SAID THAT ICRC, WORKING THROUGH GOP RATHER THAN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT, HAD BEEN ABLE TO BLOCK EVICTION OF BENGALEE
FAMILIES FROM GOVERNMENT HOUSING IN KARACHI. (APPARENTLY
MANY OF THESE BENGALEES WERE NOT REALLY ENTITLED TO
GOVERNMENT QUEARTERS, BUT AFTER LOSING JOBS HAD EITHER MOVED
IN WITH OTHER FRIENDLY BENGALEES OR INTO QUARTERS
OTHER BENGALEES HAD VACATED.) CLERC COMPLAINED THAT
RECENT GOP REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM
DESIGNATED BENGALEE REPATRIATES IN EFFECT MEANT THAT
WHOLE PROCESS OF REGISTRATION WOULD HAVE TO BE
REPEATED. CLERC WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECT
OF REPATRIATION IN NEAR FUTURE. HE ALSO DISCLOSED
TO CONGEN THAT DECEMBER PLAN FOR SWISS GOVERNMENT TO
ASSIST IN REPATRIATION HAD BEEN PUT IN ABEYANCE WHEN
SWISS DISCOVERED THAT REPATRIATES WERE SCATTERED ALL
OVER PAKISTAN AND THAT PROBLEM OF TRANSPORTING THEM
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WAS STILL UNRESOLVED.

3. CLERC MENTIONED IN PASSING THAT THERE WERE 7-8,000 NON- BENGALIEE EAST PAKISTANIS (MOSTLY FROM HILL TRACTS) SCATTERED AROUND KARACHI IN ADDITION TO BENGALIEES. HE HAD ALSO STUMBLED UPON ANOTHER GROUP OF 4,000 BENGALIEES WHICH HE HAD NOT COUNTED IN HIS ORIGINAL ESTIMATE OF 160,000. HE SAID ICRC CONTINUED TO PROVIDE UNOFFICIAL RELIEF TO BENGALIEES THROUGH INTERAID COMMITTEE AND 17 MEDICAL CENTERS IN KARACHI. HE MENTIONED THAT ICRC CHIEF DELEGATE TESTUZ WOULD BE LEAVING PAKISTAN PERMANENTLY IN APRIL, TO BE REPLACED BY A MR. MARTIN. HOWEVER, HE PREDICTED WITH EVIDENT DISCOURAGEMENT THAT IF REPATRIATION PROCESS DID NOT SOON BEGIN TO MOVE, ICRC WOULD WIND UP ITS AFFAIRS IN PAKISTAN.

4. CLERC NOTED THAT INTERNED BENGALIEE OFFICERS IN MILITARY CAMPS IN NORTHERN PAKISTAN WERE BEING SHIFTED FROM ONE LOCATION TO ANOTHER ABOUT EVERY THREE OR FOUR MONTHS. HE CLAIMED THAT GOP HAD THREE TIMES DECIDED, AND THEN CHANGED ITS MIND, TO PLACE ALL BENGALIEES IN DETENTION CENTERS. HE THOUGHT PRIME MOTIVATION FOR WISHING TO LOCK UP BENGALIEES WAS DESIRE OF SOME GOP OFFICIALS TO ASSUME DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR CARE, SO THAT WHEN INDIANS PRESENTED BILL TO GOP FOR CARE OF PAKISTANI POWS, GOP WOULD BE IN POSITION TO RECIPROCATATE WITH BILL OF EQUAL MAGNITUDE.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS HEARD NOTHING FURTHER ON INFORMAL TRANSPORT PROPOSAL OUTLINED REFTTEL B. AS USUAL, ICRC OPTIMISM HAS BEEN FOLLOWED BY COLD FACT OF INACTIONB PERHAPS MOST INTERESTING PART OF GOP OFFICIAL STATEMENT WAS ASSERTION THAT " SOLUTION" TO BENGALIEE PROBLEMS LAY IN SOLUTION TO INDO/ PAK POW IMPASSE. THIS COULD BE TAKEN TO MEAN THAT GOP IS AT LEAST THINKING OF DELAYING DEPARTURE OF 15,000 BENGALIEES UNTIL THERE IS SOME MOVEMENT ON POW ISSUE. SOBER

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